

The Rights of Faculty to Work and Students to Learn in a Non-Hostile Educational Environment

Students and faculty alike have the right to work in an environment which fulfills the provisions of the Mission Statement of the College. To accomplish this end, the rights and protections of both students and faculty must be considered.

Students have the right to expect an environment that is conducive to academic achievement and promotes life long learning; an atmosphere that elicits a free flow of creative ideas, analytical thinking, and personal growth; and a setting that is secure from harassment or financial exploitation.

To this end, each faculty member at GCC has the right to expect and the responsibility to create and maintain an orderly environment. Given that students may or may not be aware of proper behavior or skills expectations of the college, each faculty member has the right and the responsibility to establish rules and inform students of these rules in a timely fashion at the beginning of the term. While the specific rules may be governed by issues specific to the discipline, these rules governing behavior must be in compliance with College policy and in keeping with common courtesy. These rules may govern eating and drinking, participation, attendance, timely arrival and dismissal, academic honesty, sleeping, or other behavior which affects the learning environment.

The educational process occurs in an environment that fosters and rewards inquiry while recognizing and respecting differences of opinion. While First Amendment Rights and Academic Freedom are guiding principles that define the rights and the limits of language, these protections do not address the use of abusive language or ridicule by faculty members or the students. The faculty member assumes responsibility to set the tone and to intervene to protect students from abuse by others. Creating and maintaining a non-hostile environment also require careful attention to non-verbal forms of communication. Negative non-verbal behavior can be as powerful in creating a negative environment as the spoken word. Because favoritism can have adverse effects on the learning experience of all students, faculty have a responsibility to show even-handed treatment for all students.

While faculty and students alike are responsible for creating the positive learning environment required to meet the Mission Statement of the college, it is possible that conflicts will arise. To adjudicate these conflicts, every faculty member and every student have the right to grieve differences of opinion or alleged violation of the rules. The grievance procedure for students is established in Board Policy and Administrative Regulations 5101, and employee grievances are covered in Board Policy and Administrative Regulations 4050 and the Guild contract.